

# **THE FAIRFAX AREA AGENCY ON AGING PRESENTS CAREGIVER'S CORNER ONLINE JANUARY 2005**

Caregiver's Corner Online is an electronic newsletter produced by the Fairfax Area Agency on Aging (AAA) with funding from the National Family Caregiver Support Program of the Older Americans Act. Our goal is to send you information to support you as a caregiver for an older adult.

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**1. VIRGINIA CAREGIVERS GRANT PROGRAM IS BACK!** The Virginia Caregivers Grant Program provides annual grants of up to \$500 to caregivers who provide unpaid care to a needy relative. Grants are awarded for care provided for at least six months of the previous calendar year. The caregiver and person receiving care must be related by blood, marriage, or adoption and reside in Virginia. The caregiver's annual income cannot be more than \$50,000. The Virginia Department of Social Services will only accept applications between February 1 and May 1 of each year. Applications postmarked prior to February 1 or after May 1 will be disqualified. To receive a copy of an application or for more information, please contact the Fairfax Area Agency on Aging at 703-324-5485. Applications can also be downloaded from this Web site: [www.dss.state.va.us/family/as/caregivegrant.html](http://www.dss.state.va.us/family/as/caregivegrant.html).

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**2. PROJECT LIFESAVER LAUNCHED IN FAIRFAX.** Project Lifesaver finds people who have wandered away from their caregivers. The program is aimed at people with diseases (such as Alzheimer's) or disabilities (such as autism and Down syndrome) that result in wandering and an incapacity to find the way back to the caregiver. Participants in the program wear a wristband that sends out signals that can be picked up by special equipment. Project Lifesaver is international, and in other locations trained staff have successfully rescued all of the over 1,000 people who have wandered. The program is sponsored by the Fairfax County Sheriff's Department. For more information about the program, to apply, or to donate, please contact the Fairfax Project Lifesaver Coordinator at 703-246-2805.

### **3. UPCOMING SEMINARS**

\*Mind and Body Workshop at the Alzheimer's Family Day Center, 2812 Old Lee Highway, Suite 210, Fairfax, on Thursdays from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.--\$15 per session. Memory-enhancing exercises and games for people who want to keep their minds and bodies healthy and active. Call 703-204-4664 to register or check out the Web site at [www.alzheimersfdc.org](http://www.alzheimersfdc.org).

\*Are you caring for a family member who has dementia? Do you have children who wonder why grandma or Uncle Joe acts like that? If so, come to the Family Caregiver Lunchtime Seminar on Monday, January 31, from 12:15 p.m. to 1:15 p.m. at the Fairfax County Government Center, Conference Rooms 2/3, 12000 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax. Colleen Turner, MSW, of ElderLink will speak on "How to Talk to Children and Teens about Dementia and Alzheimer's disease." Questions? Please contact Betsy Pugin at 703-324-5401 or [betsy.pugin@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:betsy.pugin@fairfaxcounty.gov).

\*The Spring 2005 series of Caregiver Seminars sponsored by the Fairfax Caregiver Seminar Consortium (FCSC) is under development and will begin in April. Details will appear in the February or March editions of Caregiver's Corner Online.

**4. GUARDIANSHIP IN VIRGINIA.** (Reprinted with permission from the "Northern Virginia Long-Term Care UPDATE" newsletter.) A guardian is a person, institution or agency appointed by a court to manage the affairs of another, called a ward. A ward is an incapacitated person, someone who cannot make decisions for himself or herself. Being "incapacitated" should not be confused with having bad judgment or being foolish. Only a judge can decide that a person is incapacitated and appoint a guardian for that person. Once a judge has decided that a person needs to have a

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guardian appointed, the judge has some flexibility in determining what type of guardian to appoint. A guardian can be totally in charge of a person's affairs, or the guardian's authority can be limited to making specific decisions. The types of guardianship vary from state to state. Here are the types of guardianship available in Virginia:

\*Emergency or Temporary Guardian--A person may be appointed as a guardian for five days to handle an emergency. For example, if a person becomes ill and cannot make decisions to arrange medical care, a guardian can be appointed to arrange for that care until the person recovers.

\*Limited Guardian--A limited guardianship is used when decisions are needed for specific matters. For example, a person may be able to take care of his or her daily needs, but is unable to make decisions about health care. A judge can appoint a guardian to only make health care decisions.

\*Standby Guardian--A "standby" guardian is a person who will become the guardian of another person when the individual who is currently responsible for providing care dies. This type of guardianship is used to allow parents to plan for the care of a mentally impaired child after they are deceased. Guardianship is an extreme form of intervention in the life of a person because control over personal and/or financial decisions is transferred to someone else for an indefinite, often permanent period of time (in most cases). Once established, it can be difficult to revoke. Therefore, guardianship should only be used as a last resort. There are times when a person might need a guardian, but can be served in a less restrictive way. Here are some alternatives to guardianship:

\*Power-of-Attorney--Having "power-of-attorney" allows one person to make a decision or take action on behalf of another person. Several types of power-of-attorney exist. A limited power-of-attorney gives the person authority to take specific action on behalf of another person e.g., allow one person to sell the other person's car. A general power-of-attorney gives the person the authority to take any action on behalf of the other person. A durable power-of-attorney gives the agent the authority to act even if the other person becomes incapacitated. A durable power-of-attorney lets a person choose who will act on his or her behalf if he or she cannot act.

\*Advanced Medical Directive--An advanced medical directive selects a person to make health care decisions when a person cannot make his or her decisions. An advanced medical directive may include a "living will." A living will provides instructions about what health care decisions are wanted.

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\*Representative Payee--A representative payee is a person appointed to take care of another person's money. Government benefits may be paid to a representative payee. The person appointed to be the representative payee will be responsible for paying the other person's living expenses. The United States Social Security Administration must be contacted to have a representative payee appointed. If the person who needs to have a representative payee appointed is a veteran of the armed services, the United States Veterans Administration must also be contacted.

\*Trust--A trust is an arrangement in which one person or organization manages property for the benefit of another person. A trust states how the property is to be managed.

For more information on guardianship in Virginia, visit [www.aging.state.va.us](http://www.aging.state.va.us).

**5. PREVIOUS EDITIONS OF CAREGIVER'S CORNER ONLINE NEWSLETTER ARE NOW AVAILABLE.** Current and past editions of the Caregiver's Corner Online newsletter (July through December 2004) are available online at [http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/service/aaa/caregivers\\_corner\\_nl.htm](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/service/aaa/caregivers_corner_nl.htm).

**6. CAREGIVER CHRONICLES.** If you have a story to share or a question to ask about your caregiving experiences that you feel would be of interest/benefit to others, please submit it to [beth.hershner@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:beth.hershner@fairfaxcounty.gov). We reserve the right to determine which articles/questions will be published and to edit them for space. We look forward to hearing from you.

Please note that these items are included for informational purposes only and do not imply endorsement by the Fairfax Area Agency on Aging or Fairfax County Government.

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For further information, please contact an Aging Information Specialist at the Fairfax Area Agency on Aging (telephone: 703-324-5411; TTY 703-449-1186; or e-mail [fairfax\\_aaa@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:fairfax_aaa@fairfaxcounty.gov)) Visit our Web site at [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/service/aaa](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/service/aaa).

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